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C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 000197

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STATE FOR AF/E, AF/RSA, IO/UNP, EBB/TRA/OTP, OES/OA, L,
WHA/PPC, AND WHA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/05/2018
TAGS: [KCRM](#) [PBTS](#) [PREL](#) [UN](#) [UNSC](#) [IMO](#) [XA](#) [XW](#) [SO](#) [PM](#)
SUBJECT: PANAMA: SOMALIA AND PIRACY DEMARCHE DELIVERED

REF: STATE 18101

Classified By: POLCOUNS Brian R. Naranjo. Reason: 1.4 (d).

(C) "Panama is very interested in working through the UN Security Council to combat piracy, not only in Somalia, but also throughout the world," Panamanian DG for External Affairs Javier Bonagas told POLCOUNS on March 5. Bonagas noted that Panama had the world's largest maritime fleet, with an estimated 7,000 Panamanian-flagged vessels, crossing the world's oceans at any time. "Our vessels have been the victims of piracy off of Somalia and in the Straits of Malacca." Bonagas said that Panama had contemplated focusing on piracy during its February UNSC presidency, but decided against doing so as Panama did not want to "draw special attention to Panama or Panamanian-flagged vessels." Post believes that Panama would be highly interested in joining a UNSC effort to combat piracy that is specific to Somalia as it provides an opportunity to enhance protection for its extensive fleet without having to draw a spotlight to itself.
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